

City of Auburn, Maine

"Maine's City of Opportunity"

Conservation Commission

PARKS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, September 30, 2015 – Auburn Hall

Auburn's Conservation Commission Parks Subcommittee met on Wednesday, September 30, 2015. The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm in Auburn Hall by Committee Co-Chair Tizz Crowley. Present were Bob Sipes (Co-Chair), Leroy Walker, Misty Edgecomb, Larry Pelletier, and Chuck Lejean.

Members present introduced themselves and explained their particular interest in Parks and this work group.

Chair Crowley explained the need to change the current ordinance that addresses both Parks and Recreation. This work group is expected to proposed changes to the current ordinance. The Parks related items would be moved to under the Conservation Commission authority and responsibility, but may be delegated to a workgroup or subcommittee of the Conservation Commission. This workgroup would be in an advisory capacity only.

There was discussion around the question "What is a park?" A park is not an outdoor athletic field or facility, but parks may include such facilities. A school playground is not a park for our purposes although parks may have a playground area. School playgrounds are the school department's responsibility, but this workgroup recommends coordinating plans with schools when discussing park needs, locations, and investments. The workgroup also recognized there are a number of privately owned parks in Auburn. These should also be recognized and concerned when planning or when promoting parks and outdoor opportunities in Auburn.

The Committee recommended the Parks subcommittee/workgroup focus its efforts on Parks, Cemeteries and Open Spaces in Auburn that are owned by the City of Auburn. Tizz is to send the recent athletic fields study to the members. The link to the study, located on the City of Auburn website is

http://www.auburnmaine.gov/CMSContent/Reports_and_Studies/AthleticFieldsAssessmentFINALVERSION16JUN14.pdf.

The majority of the meeting time was spent discussing the various parks in Auburn and coming to an initial determination of what parks were known to the Committee members. There is a list of publicly owned parks in Chapter 34- Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs of Auburn, Maine Code of Ordinance. This was used by the Committee to focus discussion.

- **Pettengill Park** is a park with athletic facilities such as ball fields, Hasty Memorial Auditorium, Ingersoll Turf Facility and concession stand. The athletic facilities would be the responsibility of the Recreation Department; but the park itself and the open spaces around would be part of Auburn's Park system.

- **Moulton Park** would be part of our Parks system. It has skate board facilities that may not have been maintained by the City. There is a dedication plaque that may need removal of the graffiti.
- **Drummond Street Playground** may be considered a park with some improvements. Of particular concern was fencing and signage regarding park rules. The Parks workgroup would like a copy of Park Rules at a future meeting. The subcommittee felt this Park just needed some TLC. It is need of more trees or green shad. There is a concern of overuse due to number of neighborhood children and the teenagers from the Franklin Alternative High School program.
- **Camp Exchange** also called **Tot Lot** used to be sponsored by the Exchange Club. No one on the Committee knows this organization, but would like more information about the group. It was reported that major improvements were being made through a generous donation by Lowe's .
- **Riverfront Park** is the Riverwalk in Auburn. It starts at West Pitch Park, which is not owned by Auburn, but believe City staff does routine maintenance. Committee felt the location needs more lighting. There was a concern about homeless activity and other inappropriate actions happening along the Riverwalk. It was acknowledged that more coordination with the Androscoggin Historical Society was needed so the Knight House and Shoe Shop could be more active in the Park.
- **Bonney Park**, which is also part of the Riverwalk may need to be expanded based on the number and age of the children using the playground equipment. With the addition of more housing right on the Riverwalk, capacity may be exceeding present facilities.
- **Lakeview** are athletic fields and not a park, although there is a limited amount of playground equipment on the site.
- **Chestnut Street Park** was reported to have the best snow sledding in the City. It is hoped that a Winter Fest activity will be scheduled at this location. Steve Martelli, allows up to 5 cars to park on his property which has easy access to the Park. We definitely need better signage at Chestnut Street Park, particularly at all entrances, not just near the PAL Center. There has been great outdoor skating in this park for over 35 years- but the City needs to promote the location to others outside the particular neighborhood.
- Union Street Gully is a park with playground equipment, basketball courts, and is heavily used by the neighborhood. It is in need of picnic table(s) and bench(es). There may be space for a community garden project in this location.
- **Garfield Road** has the baseball fields as recreational facilities, but also provides access to Auburn's largest park- **Mt. Apitite**. Tizz mentioned the City had recently completed a joint land use study relating to Mt. Aptitate and would find the document. The study is available on the City of Auburn website-
<http://www.auburnmaine.gov/Pages/Government/Data-Reports-Recommendations>
- **North River Road Boat Launch** is a park that needs some enhancements. Park rules should be clearly posted. No one on the committee knew the hours this area was opened and assumed it was a locked park at times.
- **Lake Street School** is not a City Park, but a school property. Member Misty Edgecomb is particularly interested in this location. Her children use this park and it needs attention. Now that Lake Street School is not an active elementary school, there is no PTO group to help maintain the playground.

- **Festival Plaza** desperately needs signs that the flowing water is unsuitable for drinking, bathing and such. “DO NOT TOUCH THE WATER” or “Not a swimming area”. Worried about babies in diapers in this water area. The steps also need a railing- feels unsafe to many.
- **Little Andy Park** needs some TLC. New Auburn group(s) may be interested in Adopting the Park.
- **Sullivan Square Park** needs a plan and benches. With the changes at Rolly’s, the loss of the path through the Park, it’s hard to envision what’s needed now.
- **Inlet Park**, also known as Lake Grove Park, the Municipal Beach, the Outlet, or the Gatehouse, is actually owned by the LAWPC and leased to the City. Councilor Walker had submitted a plan for this park to the prior City Manager. It is a great location with wonderful potential. Tizz hopes we can settle on the permanent name.
- **Raymond Park**, located in the triangle on South Main Street, across from the American Legion, is an active neighborhood park. It is also used by people from Lewiston and Poland who do not have such a place to enjoy.
- **Central Park**, also referred to as the Old Edward Little Park, is located beside Community Little Theater. It has been significantly improved in the last year or so, but more activities need to be held at this central location.
- **Cleveland Field** is not a park. It is a recreation facility outside our authority/responsibility.
- **Pulsifer Park** is not a park but a Little League field well maintained by a private group. It would fall under the Recreation Department.
- **Middle School Park** is not a park but a school athletic facility and so not our responsibility. Several members of the Subcommittee thought the soccer fields were owned by Platz Associates.

The Subcommittee members will plan to review the current Parks ordinance(s) and will discuss at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tizz Crowley

Acting recording secretary for the meeting.